

Walk No 6: Nottingham Station

25th May & 9th June 2020

Walk No 6 is to Nottingham Station along the Nottingham Canal and back via Arkwright Walk – about 9km.

Go down Musters Road to Bridgford Road and onto Loughborough Road past the Trent Bridge Cricket Ground and Trent Bridge Inn (TBI).

I expect there are many Bridgford residents who know far more about cricket than I do, so I will keep it short.

The first recorded cricket match being held here was on an area of ground behind the TBI in 1838. The ground was formally opened in 1841 by William Clarke, Captain of the All England Cricket Team, who had married Mary Chapman, the landlady of the TBI. It is the world's third eldest test ground; the first Test match here was in 1899, with England playing against Australia – result: a draw.

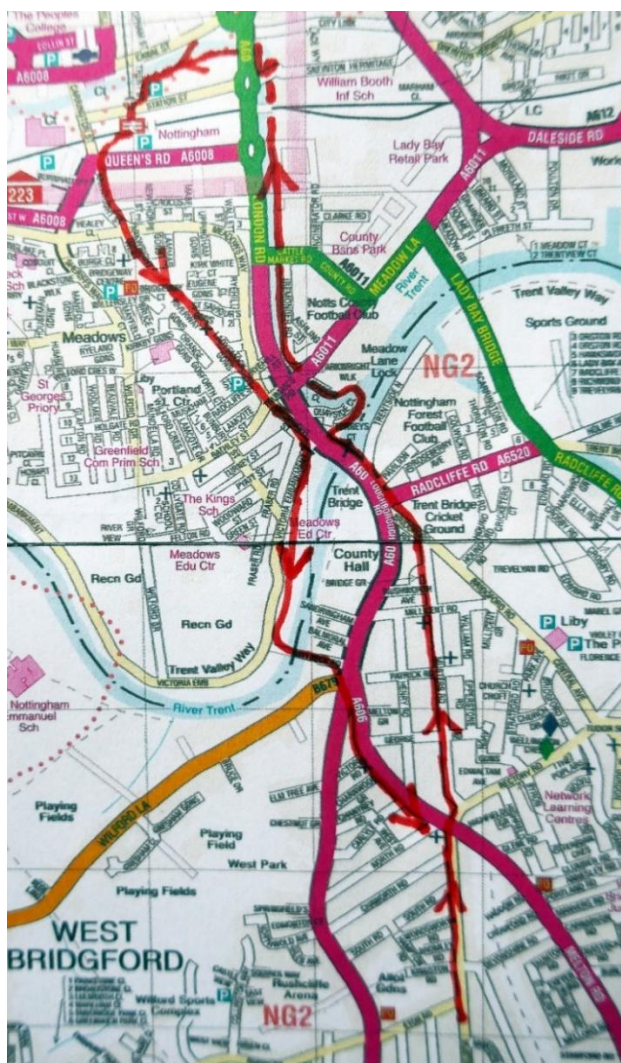


Trent Bridge circa 1890

An 1838 map of the area shows that there was an inn on the site of the TBI but named the Three Horse Shoes and Crown. It later became known as 'the pub next to the bridge over the Trent'. The original inn, which was described as 'a country inn', providing overnight accommodation for travellers on their way into Nottingham from the south, was demolished in 1890, when the present Trent Bridge Inn was built.



The Inn in 1850 by Robert Bradley



Continue to Trent Bridge

The earliest bridge here is thought to have been constructed in 920. A second bridge, known as Hethbeth bridge, Heath-beth bridge, or Heck-beck bridge (the bridge by the “hythe” or “wharf” near the “beth”, “wath”, or “ford”), was started in 1156 and had more than 20 stone arches and a chapel dedicated to St. James at one end. It was maintained by a religious organisation.

On 21 February 1551 the responsibility for repair passed to Nottingham Corporation, through a Royal Charter which created the Bridge Estate (primarily to provide for maintenance and repair, with any excess funds being allocated to improvement of the City of Nottingham and the public benefit of its inhabitants).

This bridge was damaged by floods several times, and the northern half was washed away in 1683. The repaired bridge had fifteen arches across the river and flood areas. Although it was repaired, the foundations had become unsafe and a project to replace it was started in the 1860s.

Construction of the present bridge started in 1868 and was completed in 1871, at a cost of £30,000 (equivalent to £2.8m today). There were three main cast iron arch spans each 100 feet (30 m) braced by wrought iron girders. The width between the parapets was 40 feet (12 m). It is a Grade II listed building. The new Trent Bridge formed part of a series of works along the banks of the river to improve flood defences by the construction of stepped, stone embankments.

Between 1924 and 1926 the bridge was widened to 80 ft.



Old and new bridges pictured together in 1871



Copied photo as repair work currently obscures much of the bridge.

Two arches from the old bridge are still preserved within the area opposite the end of Radcliffe Road.



After crossing over Trent Bridge, turn sharp right just before the Turneys Court building. Before its conversion into residential flats, with more housing behind (Quayside Close), this building was a tannery founded by Edward and John Turney in 1881. Turney Brothers Limited were apparently well known for producing “Trent Bridge willow calf”, one of the first UK “full chrome calf leathers” in many colours for the ladies shoe trade.



As we approach the river, there is a view back across to the nearly completed apartment block. Until the end of 2016 this was Rushcliffe Borough Council’s Civic Centre and before that Bridgford Hotel. In the mid-1950s the site was a disused cinema.



Follow the path to the left alongside the river, with a view back to the Forest ground



Ahead we see construction work on Trent Bridge Quays



And what it is expected to look like when completed

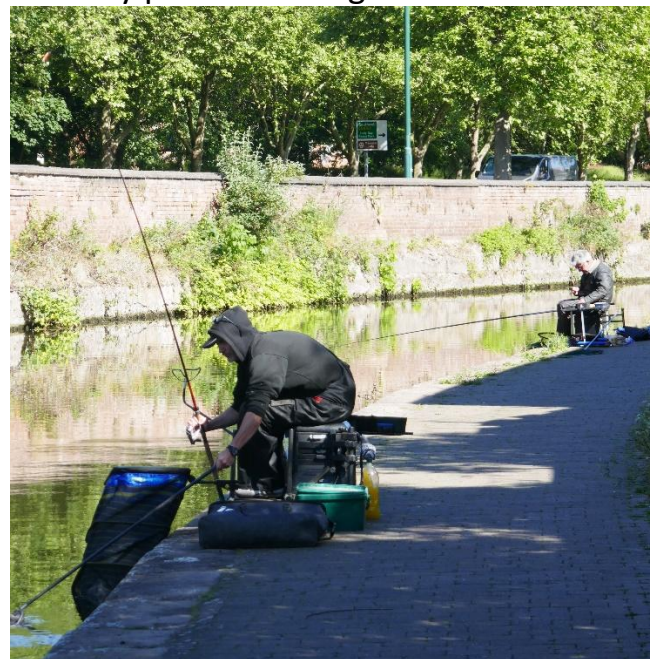


The path crosses the outflow from Nottingham Canal and we turn left onto the canal tow path and pass Meadow Lane Lock. When built (1792-96) the Nottingham Canal comprised a 14.7-mile main line between the River Trent at Trent Bridge and Langley Mill. The Beeston Cut was also built, from the main line at Lenton to rejoin the River Trent south of Beeston Rylands, thus bypassing what, at the time, was a difficult section of navigation through Trent Bridge. The section of the main line between Trent Bridge and Lenton, together with the Beeston Cut, is still in use, sometimes referred to as the Nottingham & Beeston Canal. The remainder of the main line of the canal beyond Lenton was abandoned in the mid-1930s and partially filled in.



This is a pleasant walk, with little noise impact from London Road, running alongside but behind a wall.

We may pass a few anglers.....



water lilies,



...geese and goslings...



...ducklings...



...and ducks, clearly posing for the camera!



We also go under ten bridges; 2 foot,
3 rail and 5 road.
Meadow Lane (original route)

The railway bridges (with a train of tank wagons
passing) – the canal goes under the railway,
which goes under London Road.



There are also occasional views of the busy surrounding area... the canal passes commercial premises, the council highways depot, the Eastcroft waste incinerator, and, here, the London Road Fire Station completed in August 2016 to replace Nottingham's Central Fire Station, which closed after serving Nottingham for almost eight decades.



As we pass the Jury's Inn and before reaching the Premier Inn, the tow path goes up the steps to the right, swings over the bridge and goes back down to the other side of the canal. While crossing the bridge, look over to the left to view the London Road Low Level Station building.

London Road Low Level Station building.



The Grade II listed station building was designed by Thomas Chambers Hine, a prolific Nottingham architect who, among other commissions, remodelled the castle. After closure to all rail traffic in 1988 the station was refurbished for industrial use but was severely damaged in a fire in 1996. It was subsequently restored and is now a Virgin Active Fitness Centre (not very 'active' at the present).

Back down at the canal level, we follow the path as it turns left under London Road. Looking back, we can see large pipes hung beneath the bridge and on the opposite side of the canal is an industrial building. This is the London Road Heat Station which was built in 1953 by the Boots company for use as an industrial power station, originally powered by coal from the former Gedling Colliery.



In the early 1970s the site was purchased by Nottingham Corporation and is now the Enviroenergy London Road Energy Centre (ELREC). Steam produced at Eastcroft, from the incineration of 160,000 tons of refuse annually, is piped here and used to generate electricity and provide heat to the district heating network. 68km of piping is used to supply heat to around 4,700 homes and 100 businesses across Nottingham including the Victoria and Broadmarsh shopping centres, the National Ice Centre Arena, Nottingham Trent University, BioCity, HM Revenue and Customs and The Royal Centre.

In addition to the Enviroenergy building, the canal is dominated by Waterfront Plaza (to the left) and Number One Canal Street apartments (ahead on the right).



Immediately before Trent Street bridge (with the tram bridge beyond) turn up the ramp to the left, alongside the city council offices, Loxley House, my last place of work, and onto Trent Street. Cross Station Street and go into the station side entrance and up onto the tram bridge over the station.



This is named the Karlsruhe Friendship Bridge after Nottingham's German twin town and in recognition of the support Karlsruhe staff had given to the NET team in the early years of the project. The landmark structure was designed to reflect a more splendid railway age with a magnificent 100m span tubed steel curve rather than the usual 'motorway style box girder' kind of structure. The main structure, totalling 1000 tonnes, was fabricated in two parts on the worksite south of Queens Road and then inched across using hydraulic rams over several nights (good time-lapse video can be found on the NET website).

The tram bridge provides unusual and pleasing views over the station buildings and surrounding area....



...but, for great views across the city, it is worth going into the adjacent car park and climbing to the top floor.



Return down to the tramstop level and look back towards the Lace Market:

The view today...



...and the view in 1973, shortly before this section of the Great Central Railway closed completely.



Cross the tracks and go down, through the main station and out onto Carrington Street. Nottingham's first station was Carrington Street station, which opened in May 1839, as part of the Midland Counties Railway line from Nottingham to Derby. This terminus station was situated on the opposite side of Carrington Street from the current station, on a site now occupied by Nottingham Magistrates' Court. The original station gate posts still exist and form the pedestrian entrance to the Magistrates' Courts area.

The station on the current site was first built by the Midland Railway in 1848 and rebuilt by them in 1903.

In 2016 works were completed on a £60m upgrade as Nottingham's transport 'Hub'. A joint project between Network Rail, Nottingham City Council, East Midlands Trains and the Rail Heritage Trust, the work included refurbishment of the Grade II listed Porte Cochere (changing what was a vehicular access into a concourse with cafes and shops), a new platform and the multi-storey car park, all linked with the tramstop on the bridge, significantly enhancing passenger interchange between modes.



We now head back towards West Bridgford along Arkwright Street. This was one of my walking routes to work at Loxley House – walking to work is the subject of an amusing story added at the end of this walk.

Arkwright Street is one of the most changed streets in Nottingham. It was originally a main thoroughfare running almost north/south along the eastern edge of The Meadows area of Nottingham.



1900s-1910s



1960s

Most of it was demolished during re-development in the 1970s, when most of the old Arkwright Street became Arkwright Walk; a residential street, with through traffic being diverted to Meadows Way.

The only old buildings remaining at the north end of Arkwright Street



And, at the southern end: 1900s

And now (only 2 buildings remain)



Then, in 2017, work started on further demolition, with many of the 1970s flats being replaced with new build, which is close to completion.



Finally, we either cross back over Trent Bridge, straight to Musters Road, or go along the Embankment, over the Suspension bridge and along Melton Road to Musters Road; the end of this walk.

Walk to Work

I have been sorting through old stuff (as many of you no doubt have been doing recently), and came across a Nottingham Post (then Evening Post) article which is quite amusing. The full page article (January 25 1995), with the headline "**Misery for the motorist**", was a complaint that "*The message [from the Council] in recent years has been stark and*

uncompromising: commuters should leave their cars at home. Long-stay car parking charges have soared and all-day on-street parking spaces have vanished....[Were] the city and county councils doing enough to help us get to work?". I was then head of strategic transport at the county council and I was asked to comment. I am quoted "We are encouraging more bus routes. We are putting in a lot of bus lanes and we are encouraging Park and Ride" and the future prospect of a tram network was mentioned.

The Post Editorial that day was headed "**Let's have less stick and more carrot!**" and went on "*The comments of Pat Armstrong...about what's allegedly being done to help commuters in Nottingham will go down like the proverbial lead balloon*". My reference to bus improvements elicited the response "*Big deal!*" and "*The jargon rolls off the tongues of people like Mr Armstrong...*" and went on to say "*what's the betting that Mr Armstrong drives his own car into work and uses the spacious car park at County Hall*".

I took some pleasure in informing the Post that, no, I did not normally drive to work, I walked the 1½ miles each way. I explained that many car commuters had similar distances to travel and the aim was to encourage more to use non-car options, freeing up spaces for others.

To be fair, the next day the Post had a full apology: "*The Evening Post stands corrected Wonderful! A fair cop*", but still managed to maintain a negative approach with...."*Here's at least one proponent of the anti-commuter lobby who's practising what he preaches.*"

